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WINGSPAN

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Vol. 8, No. 4 Eglin AFB, Fla. March 9, 2007

THE FINAL ISSUE

We've come a long way, baby!

■ By Staff Sgt. Samuel King Jr.
53d Wing Public Affairs

'Out with the old, in with the new,' 'times, they are a-changin,' and of course ... 'all good things must come to an end.'

Today marks the last Wingspan issue to be printed as the 53d's newsletter. All news, photos and information will now be located on the Internet at www.53wg.acc.af.mil.

In October 2006, the Air Force confirmed base-produced newspapers and newsletters would be completely eliminated by October 2007. In its place, would be wing and base Internet pages similar to the Air Force's homepage.

"A Web-based information-delivery system provides a number

of benefits," said Col. Michelle Johnson, director of Air Force Public Affairs.

Some of the benefits are posting news releases in real time, providing access to home-station news from deployed locations, and using the same delivery system at home and while deployed.

People may begin to see "military-style" newspapers delivered on base in the future, however these will be strictly civilian-produced publications.

The 53d Wingspan began in 2000 as a weekly electronic newsletter and has gone through many adjustments and changes. Over 1,500 photos and 502 stories have appeared in its pages. It has served six commanders and four editors with a readership that's grown to 20 different geographically-separated units.

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Web-based release system replaces 53d Wingspan

From the Top

By Col. Ken Willsbach,
53d Wing Commander



When I was notified I'd be taking command of the 53d Wing a year ago, one of the first things I was given to read was the wing newsletter, the Wingspan.

I immediately noted the high-quality design and eye-catching layout. Upon closer review, I realized there was also substance behind the style—the articles were well-written and covered people from Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., to our folks at Beale AFB, Calif.

More than twenty issues later, I continue to be amazed at the balance of quality, creativity and content our small Public Affairs staff produces on a bi-weekly basis. Given the special nature of our geographically-separated wing, the Wingspan's informative stories and special sections like "Warrior of the Week" and "From the Front" has often meant showing the faces behind names we primarily know over the phone or e-mail. An example of the staff's talent is displayed in the recent "Big Week" issue, which covered all the special events going on during the wing's annual awards week; special kudos goes out to the Wingspan editor, Staff Sgt. Sam King, for making the issue memorable for all of our award winners who were featured in that edition.

Given our operational test and electronic warfare mission, it's not easy to relay in laymen's terms exactly what we do, but our PA folks do a great job of breaking it down so readers understand the superb things our folks are doing—like this issue's story of the 59th Test and Evaluation Squadron's work with F-22A upgrades. I also want to commend the commanders and Unit Public Affairs Representatives who are always thinking strategically by continuously communicating these "hot" stories to the staff.

That being said, the Wingspan as we know it will no longer be presented in a graphic newsletter format due to an Air Force-wide decision to phase out all base newspapers and newsletters. The decision was focused on generating timely news stories that can be accessed immediately on the Web, instead of waiting on weekly



The new look of information delivery for the 53d Wing: www.53wg.acc.af.mil

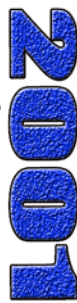
publishing deadlines and the extensive time spent on graphic layout.

So although I know I will miss having our Wingspan issue sent electronically to my office inbox every two weeks, having the wing's stories posted immediately via the 53d Wing public page at <http://www.53wg.acc.af.mil> also has a wonderful advantage. Our families and the general public, who may have previously experienced difficulty accessing the Wingspan, can now read all about the latest and greatest things we're doing to perfect lethality for the warfighter.

WINGSPAN timeline



The "Wingspan" is born as a weekly electronic newsletter for the 53d Wing. The editor was (then) Staff Sgt. Carole Steele.



Col. Joe Reyes takes command of the 53d from Brig. Gen. Jack Catton.



F-22 begins testing with the 53d Wing at Eglin AFB.



TMG becomes part of the 53d Wing family.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ben Bloker

53d TMG tests Raptor upgrades

■By Staff Sgt. Samuel King Jr.

53d Wing Public Affairs

As if the F-22A wasn't technically advanced enough, the F-22A Operational Test Team at Nellis AFB, Nevada, is taking it to the next level by evaluating the newest hard and software upgrades to the latest built Raptors, designated "Lot 5."

To reduce cost and improve capability, the fifth-generation fighter's hardware upgrades include a new radar, digital electronic warfare suite, and intra-flight data link, according to Larry Drechsel, the F-22A Lot 5 project manager.

"These improvements in Lot 5 aircraft provide the capability for future aircraft software upgrades to include synthetic aperture radar ground mapping, electronic attack, and precise geolocation of surface threats," said Mr. Drechsel.

The OTT's evaluation is a combined developmental and operational test consisting of a three-month flight test phase and a six-month suitability phase. The flight test phase of 23 missions includes four live-fire AIM-120 and AIM-9M shots with the F-22A Combined Test Force at Edwards AFB, Calif., and 19 additional missions flown from Nellis.

"We've had four successful live-fire missile shots with the AIM-

120, GBU-32 JDAM and an AIM-9 against drone aircraft," said Maj. Alan Edwards, 59th TES F-22A OTT director. "Now, the testing has transitioned from developmental to operational testing."

Two Lot 5 Raptors from the 1st Fighter Wing from Langley AFB have been transferred to Nellis for the evaluation, as well as one from Edwards AFB, Calif.

All of the test missions will be flown with both non-Lot 5 and Lot 5 Raptors. After the missions, pilots and analysts compare the results and determine if there are any tactically significant differences or interoperability problems between the two different aircraft lots.

"Suitability of the F-22A is of high interest to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and is also a major focus of this test," said Mr. Drechsel. "Suitability includes the reliability and ease of maintenance of a system or aircraft."

The 59th Test and Evaluation Squadron, along with the 57th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and 1st Maintenance Group, will collect suitability data on the new or changed equipment in Lot 5 aircraft.

Shortly after completing the flight portion of this test, the Nellis F-22A team will support the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center for the Follow-on Test and Evaluation of the F-22A Increment 2 test, a four-month test which evaluates the effectiveness of another new capabilities upgrade to the F-22A.

2007



Wingspan gets a new flag design. First TEG Raptor lands at Nellis AFB.



Col. Craig Franklin takes command of the 53d Wing.



Chief Master Sgt. Dave Collins is new command chief. Editing duties are shared by 1st Lt. Justin Herman and (then) Tech. Sgt. Tonya Keebaugh.

2007



Wingspan is completely redesigned and doubles its content. Transitions to a bi-weekly publication.

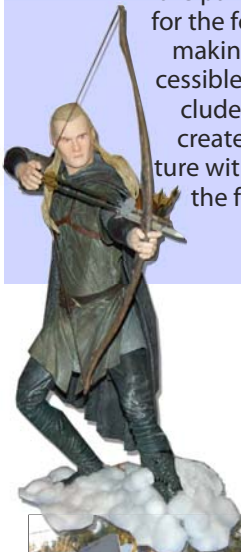
Operation Fountain

(Left to right) Jeno Nagy, Mike Hall, Capt. Eric Furman, Chad Bise, and Bruce Campbell, 68th Electronic Warfare Squadron, recently rebuilt Cherokee Park's memorial fountain.

The project came about when the Mayor of Shalimar, Fla., Gary Combs, asked the 68th if they would like to help. In 2004, the 68th helped in building the park. The 68th's two-fold plan for the fountain's redesign included making the water pump more accessible, less likely to break, and included a cutoff switch. They also created a stronger, sturdier structure within the foundation to make the fountain more rigid and less likely to tip over.



Courtesy photo



83rd FWS s Krewe



Courtesy photo

The 83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron's "Krewe of Archers" built a float for this year's St. Andrews Mardi Gras parade in Panama City, Fla., Feb. 10. This is the 83rd's sixth time participating. (Above) The "Krewe" poses with the float. (Right) Staff Sgts. Josh Jones and Jake Sabin hoist the AIM-120 into place as the float's centerpiece.

2007



AIM-9 tested at WSEP. Dynamic cover design shows one of the new layout techniques being used.



Col. Bill Coutts takes command of the wing. First black background used as a design element.



This special edition issue covered the 9/11 aftermath and stories from members of the wing.



The Hurricane Ivan issue provided in-depth coverage of how the 53d Wing recovered.

Into the sunset

Lt. Col. Anthony Franzel, 53d Wing Safety Office chief is guided by crew chief Airman 1st Class Steven Sissneros, 46th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, after his fini-flight in an F-16C Fighting Falcon Feb. 26. Colonel Franzel's final flight marks more than 2,200 flying hours during his 21-year Air Force career. He retires May 1.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Leonhard

around the AF

F-35 completes wind tunnel test

Arnold Engineering Development Center workers completed the last developmental wind tunnel test in February for all Joint Strike Fighter variants, helping put the F-35 Lightning II a step closer to manufacturing. It was the culmination of more than 8,600 hours and \$50 million worth of wind tunnel testing of the Joint Strike Fighter over the past five years, said 1st Lt. Ezra Caplan, the AEDC Air Force project manager. For the full story, enter "wind tunnel" into the af.mil search engine.

Bagram honors fallen Airmen

The 455th Air Expeditionary Wing held a formal retreat March 4 to honor the 20 Air Force members who have died in Afghanistan since Operation Enduring Freedom began in 2001. Route 56, the wing's NCO advisory council, planned the retreat. The council wanted "to remind everyone of the pride and honor that should be incorporated in our daily tasking and to create a renewed sense of

esprit de corps," said Tech. Sgt. Steven Wilson. At the beginning of the ceremony, Airmen from across the wing read the names of the twenty fallen Air Force heroes and the circumstances of their deaths. For the full story, enter "fallen Airmen" into the af.mil search engine.

Officer reduction board

The Air Force will convene an officer reduction in force board June 11 here at the Air Force Personnel Center. All eligible officers should have received an Officer Pre-selection Brief around Feb. 15. Officers are responsible for reviewing their records for accuracy and ensuring information their records are current. The Air Force announced the possibility of a RIF in early January. The force-shaping goal has been to reduce active-duty end strength through voluntary programs where possible, but the goal was not reached, said Lt. Gen. Roger A. Brady, deputy chief of staff for manpower and personnel. The window for officers to voluntarily separate from the Air Force with the Voluntary Separation Pay option has been extended to March 31. As of March 1, the service had approved just more than 2,210 applicants for the program. For the full story, enter "officer reduction" into the af.mil search engine.

2007



Wingspan wins DOD-level award for best newsletter. (Then) Senior Airman Samuel King Jr. takes the editor's seat.



Wing nails UCI compliance. Raptor drops JDAM at WSEP/FOT&E begins. Hurricanes Dennis, Katrina cause havoc.



Raptor gets name change, goes IOC. Canadians get a taste of "Hammer-time".

2007



For Big Week, the Wingspan went to a totally different design, incorporating a magazine-style layout with lots of color and flash to rave reviews.

Wing performs retreat

Members of the 53d Wing perform the first fold of the flag during the base retreat ceremony March 1. More than 100 wing personnel either attended or participated, which according to base leadership, was one of the largest showings ever.

(Left - right) Staff Sgt Erika Wronski, 85th Test and Evaluation Squadron; 1st Lt. John Reaves, 68th Electronic Warfare Squadron; 2nd Lt. Scott Eberle, 86th Fighter Weapons Squadron; 1st Lt. Charlie Grover, 53d Computer Systems Squadron; Staff Sgt. Amy King, 53d Wing Staff. Not visible are 1st Lt. Pamela Tan, 36th Electronic Warfare Squadron, and Senior Airman Jacqueline Barker, 16th Electronic Warfare Squadron.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Leonhard

news briefs

Daylight Savings

People are reminded the clock rolled forward one hour Sunday. The switch comes three weeks earlier this year and will last an extra week in the fall.

AFAF begins

The 2007 Air Force Assistance Fund Campaign has begun at Eglin. The goal for the wing is \$9,728 and benefits the AFAF Campaign's four affiliate charities: The Air Force Aid Society; Air Force Enlisted Village; Air Force Village; and the General and Mrs. Curtis E. LeMay Foundation. Contact your unit project officer for details.

Fast captain

Congrats to Capt. Scott Griffith, 36th Electronic Warfare Squadron, for finishing fifth in the Tallahassee marathon Feb. 4 with a total time of two hours and 48 minutes.

Eglin Airshow

The Eglin open house and airshow is April 14-15. The show will feature the Thunderbirds, aerial acts and static displays. For more information, go to the airshow page on the Eglin public site, www.eglin.af.mil.

Tax center

The Eglin Tax Center is now taking appointments for tax filing, help and other tax assistance. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays are walk-in days for 1040 EZ filers. For more information or to book an appointment, call 882-1040.

Prayer luncheon

The 96th Air Base Wing hosts a prayer luncheon Monday at 11:30 a.m. at Murphy's. Donations will be accepted and sub sandwiches will be served. Guest speaker is Rev. Brian Mentzer, a pastor from Washington D.C. and brother of Maj. Derek Mentzer, 85th Test and Evaluation Squadron. For more information, call 882-2111.

2007



Col. Ken Wilsbach takes over the 53d. TEG member becomes T-Bird.



Grey Dragon unit inactivates. 53d public website goes online. Wing gets new CCC.

2007



Second "Big Issue" drops with 16 total pages. End of the Wingspan announced with annual award winners.



Future All 53d Wing stories, photos, and news will appear on its public site: www.53wg.acc.af.mil.



Three 85th Test and Evaluation Squadron aircraft fly over Destin, Fla. The 85th took part in Red Flag at Nellis AFB, Nev.

Courtesy photo

85th goes west to Red Flag at Nellis

■ By Tech. Sgt. Andrew Leonhard
53d Wing Public Affairs

The spotlight may have been on Air Force's F-22 Raptor during the recent Red Flag, but the F-15s and F-16s of the 53d Wing were hard at work on the sidelines.

The 85th Test and Evaluation Squadron deployed 11 planes and 21 personnel Feb. 3 to Nellis AFB, Nev., to complete three objectives and returned Feb. 16 with those goals successfully evaluated and tested against combat scenarios.

"The 53rd Wing had a unique opportunity [during Red Flag] to simultaneously test the Eagle, Viper and Strike Eagle's cutting edge capabilities and develop lethal tactics which will be delivered to the warfighter," said Lt. Col. Sam Shaneyfelt, 85th Test and Evaluation Squadron commander.

The two-part main objective was the integration of the F-15C and F-22 and validating a new radar system, the Active Electronically Scanned Array, also called the V3 radar. The V3 is faster and has a better quality air-to-air target tracking system than previous radars, said Lt. Col. Shaneyfelt. As with most radars, the AESA's main purpose is to provide estimates of certain airspace characteristics, most commonly the presence, position and motion of aircraft, ships or other vehicles in its vicinity.

"The V3 performance was outstanding," said Colonel Shaneyfelt. "We achieved a kill ratio of nearly 14-to-1 with the V3. When you look at the highest ratio ever in combat, which was during the Korean War at 22-1, we are right up there."

With the V3 performance and the "outstanding" integration between the Raptor and the F-15s, the unit was extremely pleased with its first objective success, said the colonel.

The second objective was to test a new common software package, called the Modular Mission Computer, on the F-16s during the full-scale combat scenarios. MMC is the first common software for all Block 40 and 50 aircraft.

"MMC is a specific type of computer and operating system in the F-16 that allows the jet to handle more data and increases its computing power," said Maj. Brett Robison, 85 TES.

Some highlights of the MMC are that now it brings the capability to shoot AIM-9X (most advanced heat seeking missile), High Speed Anti-radiation Missile Targeting System (gives pilots the capability to generate precision coordinates on surface-to-air missiles), and

the capability to carry multiple types of pods on one aircraft.

As the 85th chief of F-16 programs, Major Robison helped develop the test plan for the MMC. The entire MMC project has been in the work since the 1990's, and the latest version that the 85th is testing now has been in work since 2003. The goal is to have it fielded by the end of April.

"Red Flag was good for the F-16 because this was the only time during operational testing we would be able to operate the Modular Mission Computer in an intensive, realistic combat scenario," said the five-time Red Flag veteran.

According to the major, the MMC excelled in the entire war scenario.

The final objective for the 85th was working with the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron at Nellis, outside the scope of Red Flag, to test the latest upgrades to the F-15E Strike Eagle.

"We're always looking at the next set of improvements for the Strike Eagle," stated Maj. Brian Coyne, 85th TES/Assistant Director of Operations and Chief of F-15E Programs. "During this deployment, we primarily worked in the air-to-air arena. We also got a chance to fly several four-ship Strike Eagle packages that better resemble a real-world scenario, which is rare for us in test."

"The test helped us improve our tactics, techniques and procedures for the F-15E utilizing four-ship operations," he said. "We also had the chance to develop and test air-to-ground tactics in the demanding environment of the Nellis ranges, with realistic target sets and a robust surface-to-air threat."

That demanding environment of Red Flag helped sharpen the aircrews' warfighting skills in realistic combat situations, and according to the 85 TES commander, it was an honor and privilege for them to be invited.

"We're grateful to participate at Red Flag," he said. "It's a great opportunity, in an operational exercise to help us evaluate programs under operational scenarios."

The commander also wanted to thank the many men and women who made the trip a successful one.

"Overall, this trip showcased the incredible professional performance by the men and women of the 85th Test and Evaluation Squadron Skulls, the 86th Fighter Weapons Squadron, the 28th Test Squadron, the Operational Flight Program Combine Test Force, and the 46th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron," he said.

TEG tests GMG for GWOT

■By Master Sgt. Tonya Keebaugh

99th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

A very small group of Airmen is having a dramatic effect on the battlefield. They're in demand from everyone from Army squads and platoons to large defense contractors. Everyone wants a Joint Terminal Attack Controller on their team – and with good reason.

Open up any U.S. Central Command Air Forces Airpower Summary (released daily on www.af.mil) and you'll see JTACs in action. They are crucial to putting Air Force bombs on target by controlling the air strikes the ground commander needs.

With less than 1,100 of them to go around, their career field has been forced to come up with better ideas for fighting the Global War on Terrorism. One of those "good ideas" is being tested here at Nellis in the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron and the Joint Datalink Information Combat Execution, or JDICE.

"We needed a better way of working in our air support operation centers," said Staff Sgt. Erik Roberts, 422nd JTAC. "In the past, we've marked the positions of friendly forces on a map using tacks and symbols or markers."

That way of tracking troops is archaic in today's information age. The ASOC has been using digital means to track the battlefield but haven't had the capabilities the new system will provide at their fingertips.

Sergeant Roberts is currently testing and developing training plans and tactics for the Ground Mobile Gateway. The GMG is a hummer with a shelter which contains the tactical battlefield command and control functions – in real time – which will be used at the ASOC level. The ASOC is the primary control agency component of the Theater Air Ground System for the execution of close-air support. The ASOC coordinates and directs air support for Army or joint force land component operations. The GMG is an upgrade to the existing ASOC capabilities which incorporates Joint-Range Extension data – making visible the Blue force and the Red force assets on the battlefield.

"In a nut shell, it takes all the different tactical data links into one system and spits them out to the right people," said Sergeant Roberts.

It does that by tapping the Link 16 on the F-16s, F-15Es and F/A-18s and the SADL (situational awareness data link) on the A-10s – and all CAS providing aircraft. Those two data links provide the friendly aircraft information to the GMG live – combined with the blue force tracker information and GPS coordinates from the

ground troops and JTACs – and provides a live common operating picture of the battlefield.

"I can now see the ground picture and the air picture as it's moving," said the seven-year veteran. "We let the machines do the math and let the warfighters make the decisions."

The "math" the JTACs do could be anything from calculating distance from an IP (initial point of entry for aircraft) to a target to determine the kill radius for weapons effectiveness.

That takes a lot off the shoulders of a JTAC in the middle of a battle. Doing "math in public" is often a challenge for many – let alone when mortars are raining down and you're under intense small-arms fire – so the machines will help eliminate fratricide that human-error previously played.

Because the math will be more exact, the target area will decrease in size also.

"Using DPSS (Army version of Precision Strike Suite-Special Operations Forces), we're able to sweeten the target," said Sergeant Roberts. "Instead of 'which building' will be targeted, we're talking 'which window' in that building now."

The GMG has been tested in the past three Red Flag exercises here and at the Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment, or JEFX. Sergeant Roberts said the GMG he is using for tests is "on steroids," and the ASOCs will receive a toned-down version when they start fielding them. But some JTAC units passing through Nellis for training are already gaining

valuable insight they can use in combat.

"We used it during the last Red Flag in February with the 5th (Air Support Operations Squadron) and we worked with them on their digital TTPs (training, tactics and procedures), which they will use in their upcoming deployment," said Sergeant Roberts.

As for future deployments, the ground and air communications is continually expanding capabilities. The 1,094 JTACs will only become more valuable to the ground war as advances in the way they do business increases.



Courtesy photo

The 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron is testing the new Ground Mobile Gateway, a moveable operations center that provides up-to-the-minute data on troop movement to better help pilots providing close-air support.



16 EWS major celebrates B-day in Afghanistan

■ By Maj. Gerald Campbell
16th Electronic Warfare Squadron

Well, this year I had a birthday unlike any other. It all started when I met an Army guy, who is the unit historian and an expert on old items at my deployed location.

I just bought my son, Thomas, a gift and I wanted to get his opinion on its historic significance. During our discussion, the subject of the local people came up.

We both agreed what we were doing here as a military force was incredible. We're essentially bringing freedom to a repressed people who've never had it before. We are also stabilizing and rebuilding a country that will enable all of them to have a better life.

We are building schools, roads, wells – you name it.

I said the only thing I was a little disappointed with was I'd hoped to have the opportunity to interact and get to know the Afghan people better. My heart goes out to these people, especially the kids. I have never seen so many good people who've been victims of such a small number of militants.

When we stood up the government and the Taliban saw they would never defeat us on the battlefield, they began resorting to terrorist tactics such as IEDs.

Our forces have been good at meeting that threat, but unfortunately one of the costs is we are up-armored everywhere we go. The kids and locals still love us and give us a

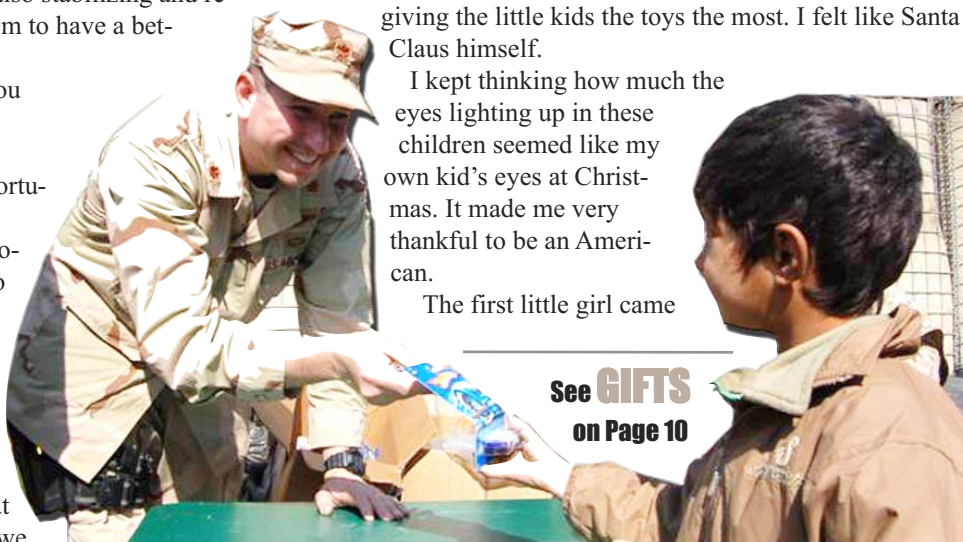
big thumbs up as we roll down the road in our up-armored convoys, but so many times I have just wanted to stop and talk and play with these kids and people.

Then he told me about Operation Care. For years, donations flooded Afghanistan with everything from backpacks to candy for the local kids. We take all these donations and go to the local hospitals and give out clothes, coats, shoes, book bags, and toys to the kids and their parents.

Today, on my birthday, I went to the Egyptian hospital and gave items to around 300 families. I know the most practical items were probably the shoes as a number of the kids were in sandals (we still have snow on the ground here), but I enjoyed giving the little kids the toys the most. I felt like Santa Claus himself.

I kept thinking how much the eyes lighting up in these children seemed like my own kid's eyes at Christmas. It made me very thankful to be an American.

The first little girl came



See **GIFTS**
on Page 10

Maj. Gerald Campbell, 16th EWS, passes out a "Hot Wheel" to an Afghan boy during an Operation Care donation drop he participated in on his birthday this year.

Courtesy photos, illustrations by Staff Sgt. Samuel King Jr.

From the FRONT

Editor's note: The "From the front" section will continue online at the 53d Wing's public site. Any 53d Wing member who's deployed can be featured. For more information and for the questionnaire, please call 882-3435.

Name: **Maj. Gerald Campbell**
Unit : **Task Force Paladin**

Job description:

Brigade Electronic Warfare Officer. Counter Improvised Explosive Device Task Force responsible for EWO ensuring that our forces Counter Radio Controlled IED Electronic Warfare equipment is installed and working properly prior to every convoy. The Brigade EWO also ensures Electronic Warfare is properly integrated and leveraged into the Army's combat operations.

What will you remember about your deployment 20 years from now?

Hopefully, that we saved lives by reducing the number of successful IED attacks against our soldiers along with the positive impact we made on the Afghan people and their children.

What's the most useful item you packed? My laptop.

What do you wish you had packed? More PT uniforms.

When did you realize you weren't in Kansas anymore aka your "Dorothy" moment? Day One, after carrying a weapon with me for 16 hours and realizing I had another 178 days of doing this.

What has this deployment taught you? Army operations

and the value of walking in an Infantryman's shoes.

Have you gained or lost weight? Lost.

How did it happen? By walking everywhere, not having a refrigerator full of food in my room, and by not having places to eat other than the Chow Hall.

What new survival skill have you learned?

Dressing in many layers for cold weather operations.

What will you buy with your hazardous duty pay or other \$ garnered from your deployment?

A family vacation.

What food are you craving most and what will your first meal be when you return? "Papa John's" pizza and anything that my wife makes. I will be ecstatic to have a home-cooked meal in my house with my family.



Maj. Gerald Campbell, 16th Electronic Warfare Squadron, poses with a friend from the Egyptian army outside of an Egyptian hospital.

GIFTS continued from Page 9

in ahead of the rest. She seemed like all the others; a pretty girl around age 11. Then I noticed that her legs were prosthetic. They had been blown off from a land mine. I honestly wanted to cry for this sweet child. We hooked her up with all the standard stuff plus a new spring and winter coat. I don't know who was smiling more, her or us when she left.

We worked with the Afghan National Army and the Egyptians, as well as service members from each of the U.S. armed services.

It truly was a great day and birthday. Although I never believed it as a child, there really is something to the saying "it is better to give than to receive." We were also lucky in that an accompanying chaplain's friend got wind of today unbeknown to us and arranged for combat camera to cover the event. We were treated with many great images of those beautiful kids.

The Lord wants us all to do his work here on earth, and with the exception of being a good father and husband, I felt as if I was more the Lord's hands today than probably any in the past year.



WINGBEAT

What were your best/worst Wingspan memories?



Former
1st Lt. Justin Herman
July 2003 - Jan. 2005

The best times were spent re-thinking how newsletters were produced to create a newsletter the Airmen really deserved. The worst really doesn't matter after that, does it?



Capt. Carlos Diaz
Feb. 2002 - Sept. 2004

When our team won best newsletter in the DoD in 2004.

The worst memories have been repressed or erased during trips to Crab Island and McGuire's...oh the good times.



SSgt Samuel King Jr.
Jan. 2005 - present

Best: Seeing the idea I had in my head take shape and become actualized on the page. And the freedom and know-how to create whatever that idea was.

Worst: Losing the creative outlet of layout with Web migration.



Master Sgt.
Tonya Keebaugh
Aug. 2003 - March 2006

The trust and faith the leadership had in us and our product. They let us have fun and be personal. (i.e. "Wing commander flies in the BUFF," 9/11 memories) and let us push the boundaries of "normal ops" for military journalism - which led us to the Thomas Jefferson Award.



The Wingspan is published by the 53d Wing Public Affairs Office exclusively for members of the 53d Wing. Contents of the Wingspan are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Gov-

ernment, Department of Defense or the U.S. Air Force. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise noted. Inputs may be submitted from <https://www.mil.wg53.eglin.af.mil/Internet>, under the "News" tab, or emailed to: samuel.king@eglin.af.mil. Deadline for inputs is close of business Monday. For more information, call 882-3435 or DSN 872-3435.

Wingspan Editorial Staff

Col. Ken Wilsbach, 53d Wing commander
Capt. Saje Park, Chief, Public Affairs
Tech. Sgt. Andrew Leonhard, Superintendent
Staff Sgt. Samuel King Jr., Editor
Pam Boutell, Administration

WARRIOR OF THE WEEK

Name: Staff Sgt. Jillian Shandrew
Unit: 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron
Job: NCIOC, Commander Support Staff
Hometown: New City, N.Y.

What is your dream vacation? To go sailing and not know where I am going. Just let the wind and the waves take me wherever they want.

What world landmark would you go see if you could?
 Great Wall of China.

Dog or cats? Why? Cats...you must earn their love and trust. Once earned, you will never have a more loyal friend.

What is your most valuable material possession, why is it so special? A stuffed animal that I've had since I was four. I take him everywhere...including my TDYs.

If you could go back in time – what time would you go to and where? Why? I'd go back to my ancestors. To see where I truly came from instead of a text book answer.

Favorite book? Why is it your favorite? "Charlotte's Web." It was the first book my mother and I read together.

What was the best advice your mom/dad gave you?
 People are like books...don't judge them by their covers.

If you weren't in the Air Force, what would you be doing?
 I would be a high school American Literature teacher.

If you could have dinner with any three LIVING people other than your family, who would you choose? 1. My high school American Lit teacher 2. Dean Koontz 3. Yao Ming.

What celebrity do you have a crush on, now or when you were younger? Yao Ming.

What are your best and worst habits? Best: I adapt to any situation. Worst: I smoke.

What your coworkers don't know about you?
 I have seven tattoos.



FEATHERS of the wingspan

Unit: 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron "Desert Pirates"
Location: Edwards AFB, Calif.
Commander: Lt. Col. Kyle Robinson
Personnel: 130

Mission:

The mission of the 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron is to plan and conduct initial operational test and evaluation of advanced ACC weapons systems prior to fielding by the Combat Air Forces and to provide skilled operations, maintenance, engineering and analytical expertise to assess overall system effectiveness and suitability under realistic threat scenarios. The 31st TES Desert Pirates provide AFOTEC with CAF-trained warriors to execute AFOTEC-led testing of major weapon systems prior to fielding. They also provide ACC with valuable "early in-

volvement" in testing through participation in combined developmental and operational tests as a member of the Combined Test Forces at Edwards.

Current projects:

The 31st TES is currently working projects on B-1, B-2 and B-52 weapons systems, ensuring our bombers are capable of providing firepower at any level necessary to support the US plan of battle. Work on the newest versions of the Global Hawk and Predator unmanned aerial vehicles continues to provide combatant commanders with state of the art reconnaissance and rapid response capabilities. The 31st's cutting edge, early involvement in the Airborne Laser program is allowing the squadron to play a key role in the future defense of our country against catastrophic threats.

Facts:

The 31st TES members are known as the "Desert Pirates" due to their patch, which prominently features the skull and crossbones. The Desert portion of the nickname comes from the squadron's long-time association with Edwards, which is prominently situated in the Mojave Desert.